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AUTHOR Freeman, C. Elaine
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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes the findings of a case study designed to determine if differences exist in the higher education planning and policy making process in Missouri and Oklahoma. A background and perspective section develops the definitions of key concepts relying on definitions from the work of Daniel Elazar. A section describing the study itself details the use of the qualitative, multiple embedded, case study method; and describes the sources of data which included interview, observation, and the examination of documents and artifacts. Two sections follow, each presenting extensive description of either the Missouri or Oklahoma situation. A comparison section contains a synopsis of Elazar's political subcultures and a summary of the analysis of the higher education case findings in the two states. A conclusion finds that the political culture is a major factor in influencing higher education policy making and that the Missouri state ethos springs from individualistic concern with the marketplace and confidence in the ability of the business world to enhance the quality of life for citizens. The Oklahoma state ethos includes a historical distrust and dislike of big business and an allegiance to the southern agrarian idea of maintaining the traditionalistic status quo. Included are an interview model and 44 references. (JB)

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MISSOURI AND OKLAHOMA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STATE HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND POLITICAL CULTURE

by

C. Elaine Freeman
Missouri Southern State College

Presented at the Annual Meeting
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Diversity is a word that best characterizes the process of state higher education planning and policy making in the fifty states. Legislative, lay board, state agency, and citizen involvement and expectations vary dramatically. Fuhrman and Rosenthal (1981) noted the increasingly political nature of the education policy making process and specifically suggested the need for research in the area of education policy making.

Daniel Elazar (1979, 1984) has developed a theory of political culture, defined as the "particular pattern of orientation to political action in which each political system is embedded" (p.109). Elazar contended that the historical migration patterns of the United States resulted in the development of three specific subcultures with differing political beliefs and behavior patterns. These subcultures are believed to be operational in a variety of combinations of each of the fifty states today.

This paper summarizes the findings of a case study designed to determine if differences exist in the higher education planning and policy making processes in two neighboring states, Missouri and Oklahoma (Freeman, 1990). The study determined that differences do exist and that the differences may be explained by the political culture framework proposed by Elazar.

Background and Perspective

Higher Education Policy Making. Policy making in public higher education is divided among three major sectors: the local institution, the state coordinating board, and the state government. Within these sectors are varying state policy players. The local institutions may be represented by a lay board of control, the college president, an institutional lobbying group or any combination of the three. The state coordinating board typically includes a lay board of control, a chief executive officer hired by the board, and a professional staff employed to serve the board. The most recognized connection with state government is the budgetary power of the

state legislature. Additionally, in recent years the executive and judicial branches of government have played an increasingly significant role in state higher education decision making.

The role of coordination is one of particular complexity due to the dual role of serving the local institutions and state government. Berdahl (1971) identified the three specific roles of the coordinating agency as:

1) advocate for the interests of higher education;
2) administrative agency for the state; and
3) intermediate mechanism for interpreting the needs and goals of each side to the other. (p. 24)

The coordination role tends to be closely linked to specific legal powers conferred by lawmakers (Berdahl, 1971). In many states, the agency role is predicated upon the confidence level of legislators in the coordinating board and agency personnel.

Greer (1979) in a study of the higher education policy making process in Ohio, emphasized the differing expectations which create a major political dilemma for the coordinating agency. The state government officials, legislative and judicial, tend to see the agency as a state operation designed to "regulate and monitor the operations of Ohio's public system of higher education" (p. 1) while the individual institutions believe that the appropriate role for the agency is the transmission of the needs of the higher education community to the State Legislature and the provision of assistance in gaining the resources for meeting the institutional needs. Thus, the competing issues of advocacy, mediation and regulation highlight the complexity of a dynamic process of interaction between political and higher education leaders, orchestrated to a degree by the power afforded the state coordinating agency.

Movement toward central coordination appears to be a unifying trend in the state higher education decision making process; however, variety continues to be perpetuated through differing modes of interaction between

local, agency and government players; and through differences in the actual structure of the coordinating agencies. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1976) warned against the advocacy of any one coordination model:

> Each state has a different history, a different set of policies for financial support, and thus, decisions about coordination will tend to be quite various...what works well in one place may not be satisfactory in another. (p. 13)

Political Culture. The review of the logic and applications of the political culture theory of Elazar (1984) lends credibility to the use of this theory as a source of difference in the state higher education decision making process.

Political culture, as previously defined, is "the particular pattern of orientation to political action in which each political system is embedded" (Elazar, 1984, p. 109) and plays a major role in the public understanding of government and politics and the actual practice of government. Elazar (1984), through the analysis of historical migration patterns, identified three distinct subcultures that are believed to be operational in varying combinations throughout the United States. The subcultures are termed moralistic, individualistic, and traditionalistic.

The moralistic subculture is characterized by citizen involvement and the pursuit of the common good. The individualistic subculture is rooted in concern for the marketplace and the pursuit of individual interest and the traditionalistic subculture is distinguished by elite control and the maintenance of an existing social order. Elazar classified Missouri as having a dominant individualistic subculture with a traditionalistic strain. Oklahoma has the opposite classification in which the traditionalistic subculture is dominant with a strong individualistic strain.

Elazar's (1984) theory of political culture is used in a variety of studies as a means of making sense of the political behavior, values, and

attitudes of policy-makers and citizens; and, as a means of understanding the actual way that government is practiced in the United States. Additionally, research has been conducted to empirically verify the qualitative work of Elazar (Sharkansky, 1969).

A number of studies reported the quantitative linkage of political culture with policy actions and attitudes. Wirt, Mitchell and Marshall (1985) determined that state policy elite responses closely match Elazar's historical designations for their state. Welch and Peters (1980) found a match between legislators' attitudes and their state subculture, and Lovrich, Daynes, and Ginger (1980) demonstrated a strong relationship of political culture to county public policy. Wirt (1980) confirmed that state control and state money do not run parallel due to the intervening influence of political culture and Ritt (1974) connected political culture with political reform.

The relationship of political culture to political participation was supported by Sharkansky (1969), Johnson (1976), Kincaid (1982) and Schiltz and Rainey (1978). Varied conclusions which linked political culture to quality of life (Kincaid 1980, 1982); public opinion (Joslyn, 1980); interparty competition and voter turnout (Hanson, 1980); and school board action (Foster, 1983); suggested a diversity of applications and illustrated the utility of the concept in a broad political arena. Kincaid (1980) suggested that [the understanding of] political culture should play a role in the formulation and implementation of public policy and and Ritt (1984) quoted Patterson's conclusion that "political culture ought to be a major focus in the study of comparative American politics" (p. 133).

In summary, a variety of public policy and common education issues have been successfully linked to the theory of political culture as developed by Elazar (1970, 1984). With the exception of one inconclusive but provocative

study regarding political culture and community college action (Garland & Martorana, 1988), higher education was not considered. This omission, coupled with the increasingly political nature of higher education, led to the development of the current study designed to examine the relationship of political culture to higher education planning and policy making.

The Study

The premise for the study was that differences exist in state higher education policy making in Oklahoma and Missouri which are linked to political culture in the areas of statewide higher education planning and policy making; political behavior of the primary participants; and the organizational structure of statewide higher education planning and policy making. Differences were defined as distinct variations while the term state higher education planning and policy making represented the process in which public higher education decisions are reached. Political culture is defined by Elazar (1984) and Elazar's state categories were used to identify the cultures of Missouri and Oklahoma. Political behavior is the actual way the art of government is practiced by citizens, politicians, and public officials and primary participants are defined as those who are closest to the actual decision making and include key legislators, administrators, interest group members, and others who become involved in the policy making process.

Case Study Method. Differences in state higher education planning and policy making in Missouri and Oklahoma were explored utilizing the qualitative case study method. A multiple embedded case study design was employed in which two single case studies provided conclusions suitable for cross-state theoretical comparison.

The decision to employ qualitative research methods was based in the need to understand the context. Smith and Glass (1987) defined context as

the "physical, social, and material environment in which human action takes place" (p. 265). Human action and belief such as the individual actor's beliefs about government; the interactions between individual policy makers and policy making groups; and commonly held symbols, attitudes and traditions all provided vital contextual clues for understanding a highly diverse decision making environment. For example, the ease in which interviews were obtained in Missouri and the difficulty of access to policy makers in Oklahoma provided contextual clues for understanding the communication patterns of the two states.

Yin (1988) advocated the use of the case study when contemporary events are examined and the relevant behaviors and events cannot be manipulated. Case study was defined as:

> an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. (Yin, 1988, p. 23)

Data were collected utilizing the multiple methods of interview, observation, and the examination of documents and artifacts. The interview was the predominant tool with the other methods serving to provide missing information and to verify or challenge the correctness of the interview analyses.

An elite interview sample of primary participants in the state planning and policy making process in Missouri and Oklahoma included representatives from the state agency/coordinating board and the legislative and executive branches of government. The assistance of expert observers was also sought in Oklahoma to provide missing data. The current study was based in a pilot study completed in Missouri in 1987.

Seventeen interviews were scheduled and conducted between February 9, 1990 and April 26, 1990; eight in Missouri and nine in Oklahoma. Original

interview data from four interviews in 1987 were incorporated into the present work as well.

Observation included legislative sessions in both states, coordinating board meetings in both states, and selected public hearings and higher education appropriations committee hearings in Oklahoma. Histories, news reports, and government documents provided pertinent data as well.

Data Collection and Analysis. The work of Fuhrman and Rosenthal (1981) provided an organizational framework to facilitate comparative analysis of the two states. The framework included the structure of legislative education leadership, the composition of legislative education leadership, linkages of legislative education leadership, the styles of legislative leadership, and the impact of legislative leadership (See Appendix). Interviews were conducted with the goal of utilizing the primary participants' perceptions of legislative roles and leadership in higher education planning and policy making as the major basis for comparison.

The data were analyzed utilizing the stream of history approach of Neustadt and May (1986) in which actions and events were considered in an historical context, rather than as isolated, unrelated happenings. Data describing the State Legislatures were organized into categories closely corresponding to the Fuhrman and Rosenthal (1981) model. Logical analysis of interview, observation, and printed data was used to uncover major patterns and themes for each state which resulted in distinct categories such as view of government and patterns of political belief. Finally, the findings from each of the two cases were juxtaposed with Elazar's (1984) theory to determine if case study data matched Elazar's classification for the state.

The following sections contain a synopsis of the formal higher education decision making structure and summary of the case findings for each state, an

interstate comparison, and the conclusions. The reader is referred to Freeman, 1990 for a review of the original case data summarized in the findings.

Missouri

Structure. The Missouri General Assembly plays a powerful role in the higher education planning and policy making process in Missouri through the appropriation of funds directly to the state universities and colleges, through legislation, and through authorship of the structure in which the process takes place. The current structure, established by a 1972 Constitutional Amendment, includes a constitutional coordinating board, the Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE), with powers granted by statute. These powers, determined by the General Assembly, include: 1) statewide planning for higher education; 2) policy analysis; 3) academic program approval and review; and 4) making operating and capital budget recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly (Official Manual, 1989-90). The Commissioner for Higher Education is the chief executive officer of the CBHE, serves at the pleasure of the Board, and is considered to be the agency liaison to the General Assembly (Wittstruck, 1990).

Each institution has a separate governing board and a great deal of autonomy is afforded the local boards and their leaders (Aery, 1987). The University of Missouri is considered to be one institution with multiple campuses while the other institutions have single campus boards. The local governing boards retain the responsibility for institutional planning and mission, individual courses, fee structure, and admissions standards (Official Manual, 1989-90). Some overlap exists with the CBHE in the area of institutional planning and mission development.

The budget process begins at the local level with each campus developing and submitting an institutional budget request to the CBHE and the General

Assembly. The CBHE submits a total budget request to the General Assembly and the local campus may support that request or submit a separate request. Presidents of the institutions are invited to testify before the CBHE and the appropriations committees of the General Assembly. Final budget decisions are made by the General Assembly, subject to the Governor's approval.

The policy makers report that the Governor plays a multiple role in the higher education process through stated public policy, budget recommendations and veto power, selection of the CBHE members, selection of local governing board members, and through occasional direct public appeals.

Themes. Concern with the relationship of higher education to economic development was the primary focus of the interviewees in the Missouri case. This was particularly evident in attention to the global market and the need to utilize higher education to prepare for successful state competition in the twenty-first century. This economic agenda dominated each of the major findings or themes in the case. These interrelated themes included: 1) political dynamics; 2) the power of the Legislature; 3) the focus on individual interest; and 4) the economics of education. Each of the themes will be summarized in light of formal organizational structure and political behavior.

Political Dynamics. A decentralized decision making structure of higher education exists in which multiple input at all levels contributes to an openly "political" environment. Many key players at the local, agency, legislative, and gubernatorial ranks interact in varying ways to make their agendas known. For example, a permeable structure encourages College Presidents to lobby the agency in terms of budget needs as well as presenting their case directly to legislators in both houses of the General Assembly.

The violently partisan House is structured in such a way that the dominant Democratic party is responsible for not only determining leadership but for naming the committee members of both parties.

The Senate emphasis on bi-partisan structure and control where majority and minority leaders sit together and minority members may hold positions of influence is vastly different from the organization of the House. Characterized by outsiders as a "brotherhood" or "club", (Jacob, 1990) the Senators tend to downplay party affiliation and emphasize their mutual interests. Caskey (1990) explained that "if you watch the votes in the Senate there are very few party line votes...It is more geo [geographically] driven in the Senate than it is politically driven." The Republican House members take advantage of this philosophy by working together on a bi-partisan basis with Democratic Senators to circumvent the partisan politics of their chamber. Interestingly, the entire General Assembly is perceived to be partisan in external dealings with the Executive Branch (Kincheloe, 1990).

The primary participants in the higher education decision making process frankly acknowledged the political exchange in which bargaining, compromise, "deals" and alliances are a necessary and normal part of achieving political objectives. Included in the philosophy is a business-like conception of politics based in mutual obligations and personal ties to fellow legislators and local constituents. Party loyalty is the requisite in the partisan House, and, to some degree, in the more consensual Senate for leadership positions. A large number of committees are maintained for the purpose of providing partisan rewards in the form of chair appointments.

Legislative Power. The awareness of collective legislative power over higher education permeated the conversations with primary participants. The Legislature controls the structure of higher education through authorship of the laws bringing it into existence and the power to make changes in those

laws at any time. The Legislature maintains significant control over funding and the relatively weak Coordinating Board for Higher Education is imbued with basic advisory powers.

Close scrutiny reveals a deliberately decentralized structure which places major policy authority in the hands of the local institutions coupled with individual efforts by legislators to protect the autonomy of the local institution(s) which they represent.

Finally, the creation of a task force composed of business leaders and educators to ensure higher education's readiness to compete economically in the twenty-first century diffuses power beyond the traditional legislative structure to the marketplace. Once again, the power is conferred by the Legislature and may be revoked.

Evidence of legislative power was expressed implicitly through the attention to the extension or withholding of credibility of key players. A sense of maintaining the reins of power or relaxing them was particularly evident in the discussion of Commissioners for Higher Education, who tended to represent the competency of the Coordinating Board and agency in the mind of the legislators. Former Commissioner Aery commanded great respect in the Legislature because of the Legislators' confidence in her expert power, political ability and lack of alignment with any specific political faction. Jacob (1990) afforded her the respect of a veteran politician:

> She was tough, she had guts, she had her own mind, she was a very astute politician. She certainly understood the problems and was a very able person...a significant adversary to have to fight at times.

The adoption of a "wait and see" attitude regarding the new Commissioner was evident on both sides of the aisle and Democratic legislators were particularly concerned with the perception of a CBHE alignment with the Republican Governor's office. Jacob (1990) commented on the balancing act of the new Commissioner.

> ...he has to straddle the fence...he can't totally play the Governor's tune because we can have his head as easily as the Governor can...if enough people start throwing spears at Charlie McClain or any other executive, he's gone. The Governor couldn't stand the bad publicity.

Current stories by legislators of endruns around the CBHE such as an attempt to establish an engineering program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis (Molloy, 1990) demonstrated the diminished authority of the Board in the legislative eyes.

Stories of the power and political savvy of individual legislators and their attention to local institutions suggest that individual interest displaces the idea of elite control in the legislative body. Though some progress was made through factional alignments and informal ties of an "in" group, the major power tended to be in the political savvy of "wheeling and dealing" to achieve individual interests in a situation where business-like trade-offs were necessary to achieve political goals.

Individual Interest. Individual interest emerged as a major theme in Missouri politics in general as well as in the higher education realm. Part of the reason for the intense individual interest stems from the historical and cultural diversity of the state which has resulted in the various sections of the state having more in common with neighboring states than with other parts of Missouri. Distinct eastern, western, and southern cultures currently exist within the state boundaries (Wittstruck, 1990).

Individual interest was frankly acknowledged by higher education decision makers and is evident in an educational structure which places major value on strong local power as manifested by the traditional autonomy of the individual institutions. This individual interest was evident in the contention that the only unifying element of the decentralized structure is its "fragmentation" (Jacob, 1990).

Concern with individual interest has resulted in a parochial attitude by primary participants toward the particular local institution(s) which they represent (Kincheloe, 1990, McClain, 1990, Molloy, 1990, Surface, 1990, Jacob 1990, Melton, 1990). Turf wars between institutions in the "old days" led to the establishment of the CBHE to serve as a buffer between the Legislature and the institutions (Webster, 1987). In reality, the continued close ties between the local campus and the legislators cast the CBHE in the role of having only one voice among many higher education agendas.

The multiple agendas were openly acknowledged as a fact of life by primary participants and an effort was made by the interviewees to provide research access to a broad sample of differing viewpoints. Parochialism was cheerfully acknowledged but all based their individual agendas in the unwavering belief that what was good for one was good for all. The competing agendas were frequently defended as solutions to marketplace issues of economic development, access and fiscal responsibility.

> People accuse me all the time of being very, very parochial, and, to some degree, they are right. But I am parochial out of the perspective that if we don't do this our whole state economy's going to suffer and the metropolitan areas are what drives the state economy just to provide services to the rest of the state and if you don't do that you are just blowing the future...I think we ought to reallocate a lot of resources [to the metropolitan universities]...we're gonna have to show some good faith effort in terms of what we've got. (Molloy, 1990)

There was consensus on the broad goals of preparation for economic competition into the twenty-first century and developing the Business Education Partnership Commission, comprised of legislators and business leaders, to evaluate the current system and to chart higher educations course into the future. Competing agendas led to squabbles regarding numbers, membership, and responsibility which delayed the beginning of the Commission's work and slowed progress.

Economics of Education. A common theme in the diverse agendas described by the primary participants was the recognition of the importance of higher education to state economic development and for successful competition in the global economy of the next century. Individual interest was evident in the varying methodologies proposed but business principles dominated the agenda. Caskey (1990) described the rationale for the Business Education Partnership:

> [we realized] that if we're going to be competitive on a world market that it was important that we start looking into the future and determining where education should be and how we should be developing in the state of Missouri in order to be competitive on a world market...

The Governor, acutely aware of the negative public opinion toward new taxes, argues for the demonstration of value received for dollar invested. This approach, adopted by the Commissioner and CBHE, includes efforts to improve system efficiency through downsizing, mission differentiation, targeted resources, and an elaborate system of assessment to demonstrate product quality to the consuming public before considering increases in funding (McClain, 1990, Kincheloe, 1990).

The business community, College and University Presidents, and urban interest groups joined key legislators in decrying Missouri's dismal record of competition with economic competitors and issued the call for financial investment in higher education as investment in the future.

> ...in order to meet the demands of the next decade and into the 21st Century, the state's system of higher education must dramatically increase the number of students it serves, introduce a new generation of educational and technological equipment and prepare students to see beyond the limits of a national economy to the new global society...A more substantial investment must be made in higher education in order to secure Missouri's future in this new global economy. ("Missourians for Higher Education, 1990)

Summary. A review of the Missouri case revealed that economic issues dominate the multiple and competing agendas of the primary participants in the higher education decision making process. The "political" tools of

bartering, compromise, and alliances are openly utilized in the Legislature to forward the individual agendas of the members who strive to demonstrate the economic value of their particular positions. The Business Education Partnership Commission is illustrative of the the concern with preparing for the marketplace of the twenty-first century and appeared to be the "only game in town" as far as immediate substantive higher education action is concerned.

Oklahoma

A central coordinating board of control, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, has the constitutional power for the fiscal and academic operations of the public institutions of higher education. The Legislature appropriates a lump sum to the Regents and the Regents allocate the funds to the local institutions. The Board was created in 1941 with the constitutional responsibility to: 1) prescribe higher education standards for each institution; 2) determine functions and courses of study for each institution; 3) grant degrees and various forms of academic recognition at each institution; 4) recommend budget allocations for each institution to the Legislature; 5) allocate funds to each institution; and 6) determine student fees (Oklahoma State Regents, 1982). The Chancellor for Higher Education is the chief executive officer for the State Regents and serves at the pleasure of the board.

In addition to budget recommendations, the local governing boards are specifically responsible for: 1) management policy; 2) employment, salary and duties of employees; 3) contracting for services; 4) record custody; 5) purchasing and owning property; 6) academic administration; 6) student life; 8) administering the budget; 9) purchasing; 10) facility planning and construction; 11) auxiliary enterprises; and 12) general administration (Oklahoma State Regents, 1982).

The regional universities are grouped under one governing board, the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges. The Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges governs Oklahoma State University, Panhandle State University, Langston University, Cameron University, Northeastern Oklahoma A & M College, and Connors State College. The President of the State Board of Agriculture is a voting ex officio member of the A & M Board. The other universities and colleges have individual governing boards (Oklahoma State Regents, 1982).

The Governor impacts higher education through appointment of State Regents and governing board Regents and through budget recommendation.

Themes. Analysis of the Oklahoma case revealed a higher education "contest" between forces protecting the existing order and forces for change. This "contest," which pits the status quo against change, emerged as the dominant theme in higher education decision making in the state and is manifested in the battle between those satisfied with the provision of access and those seeking an assurance of quality. Barnes (1990) noted the traditional relationship of access and quality:

> ...we were consumed with interest and drive for accessibility. That's an honorable objective for a public system and if we got quality along the way in that process, it was bonus, it was to be revelled in and obviously enjoyed and talked about and promoted but it wasn't sought as a purpose or an objective in and of itself.

The "contest" theme dominated the findings and three more subtle themes provided needed understanding of the dynamics of that "contest." These interrelated themes included: 1) control of information; 2) competition for advantage; and 3) the prevalence of ideology over ideas. The themes will be summarized in terms of organizational structure and political behavior in the following sections.

The "Contest". The legal structure of higher education decision making in Oklahoma is centralized and places great power in the hands of a

constitutional coordinating board of control, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. This centralized structure didn't seem to fit the stories related by the policy makers and observers. Closer examination revealed the apparent dual existence of a formal organizational structure which is clear and easy to understand and an informal structure within which higher education decisions have traditionally occurred. The legislative structure of one party dominance contributed to the informal structure and apparent elite decision making. Though never completely clarified, the informal structure, allegedly a part of the past, consisted of a coalition of "insider" legislative education leaders, the Chancellor, and the leaders of the local institutions. The Board carried out the wishes of this informal group with little external scrutiny or input. Williams (1990) described the way higher education operated when she arrived in the early eighties.

> ...it was hard to raise questions because we never had meetings...the chairman of the committee [higher education] was a friend of the [then] new Chancellor...who came in 1982. He was his colleague and friend from Midwest City and so the Higher Ed Chairman in the House and the Senate were all from the same little precinct and I mean it was cozy.

The ongoing pattern was challenged by the election of "outsiders" to key legislative education positions who utilized the informal structure to form key alliances and secure the passage of legislation forming the Oklahoma State Higher Education Task Force in 1985. The Task Force was charged with the completion of an unprejudiced study of the state's higher education system. The alarming findings of the bi-partisan Task Force added the needed spark to translate the concern of a few interested legislators to a statewide impetus for change. The report concluded that the creation of a superior system of higher was crucial to both the economic future of the state and the quality of life of its citizens. Scathing criticism of traditional funding patterns, satisfaction with adequacy over excellence, and lack of leadership led to the scathing pronouncement that:

> QUALITY higher education for Oklahomans must be the focus but can be achieved only with STRONG NEW LEADERSHIP and public recognition of the sacrifices required. (Oklahoma Higher Education Task Force, 1987, p. 6)

Fueled by the findings of the Task Force, the new legislative leaders focused their efforts at the state level through the appointment of a new Chancellor and new Regents dedicated to high academic standards and the implementation of a system of centralized accountability. Proactive regents from the business sector and the Chancellor, in turn, began working for education reform, the first item being appropriation by the Regents of the power afforded by the Constitution to the State Regents for Higher Education.

Battle lines were drawn with the "outsiders" publicly calling for modernization (economic benefit) and the "insiders" quietly struggling to protect their traditional "turf." The absence of any dialogue between the opposing sides is the first clue to the subtle themes which inform this controversy.

Control of Information. Both explicit and implicit control of information was noted by the the author throughout the research process. The difficulty encountered by change agents in receiving answers about the higher education process, a perceived need for secrecy in assuring a fair search for the Chancellor, and reported institutional control of information are explicit examples of a closed system of communication.

Even more revealing were the implicit controlling devices of unity in the stories of the change agents, the lack of detail regarding their ascent to power, frequent general responses to controversial questions, and difficulty in gaining access for legislative interviews. This closed communication system seems to be related to the maintenance of some advantage.

Maintaining the Advantage. The competition for advantage was couched in very subtle terms. The assertion that one tier of the higher education system is receiving more than another, the apparent control of information in an environment where ally only speaks to ally and details of those alliances are carefully guarded, and an atmosphere where the press carefully interprets the public message are examples of the control of information for the purpose of maintaining or gaining an advantage.

A further complication is that a corrupt atmosphere, in which public officials frequently face indictment for wrongdoing, causes the public to distrust a change orientation promoted by public officials and to support the maintenance of the status quo.

This atmosphere of restricted information and competition for advantage has led to a crusade for ideology rather than a free exchange of ideas.

Ideology. Further analysis of the higher education case revealed a "contest" of strictly opposing ideologies. Conservative forces comfortable with life as they know it and liberal forces who favor modernization and change were presented by the media. The "right" side is based in geographical divisions with the western part of the state embracing the conservative view of local control and satisfaction with the higher education system, and the eastern part of the state supporting more centralization as requisite to modernization and quality.

An inability to publicly engage in this "contest" is precipitated by a lack of conversation between opposing sides. Thus, the exchange of ideas is subsumed by one-sided ideological presentations.

Historical Framework. Why do many state citizens resist change so vehemently? Historically, Oklahomans have been ill-served by outsiders and big business. A migration stream of southern agrarian landowners brought the tradition of elite personal politics and the maintenance of the status quo to

the young state. Many Oklahomans, not privileged with leadership in the elitist structure, looked with hope to the advent of railroads and the influx of large business as equalizing forces and as an opportunity for economic gain. Corrupt practices of the early entrepreneurs led to worsening conditions for the people in which the tycoons became richer and the rank and file were expected to work for subsistence incomes. The tide of hope turned to hatred for big business. The only place Oklahomans felt they could turn was to the powerful leaders or "good old boys" who represented the traditionalistic agrarian value system and the pattern continues to this day (Kinsey, 1990).

The leaders of the change movement are perceived as representing the view of the outsiders and the business community which signals a threat to rank and file Oklahomans. The historical distrust is coupled with an inability to distinguish corrupt officials from ethical officials in the current closed system of communication. Higher education has not been immune to corruption and the observers report numerous incidents including textbook scandals, the indictment of the former Chancellor, and the recent imprisonment of College and University Presidents (Smith, 1990, Logsdon, 1990, Kinsey, 1990).

Additionally, the value of equality is equated with the close geographical access to "known" institutions of higher learning governed by local boards and officials perceived as protectors of the citizens' interests. Change could limit access as it is currently known and shift power to the "unknown" outsiders. Finally, change carries a price tag and the conservative stance is opposition to tax increases for any reason.

The On-Going Struggle. The ultimate fate of the change movement in Oklahoma higher education rests in the ability of the change agents to move beyond the polarization created by closed communication, fear of losing an advantage, and the acceptance of ideology over ideas. Though the "contest"

is apparently over access versus quality, there needs to be an assurance to grassroots Oklahomans that the goal is access with quality.

The Regents' attempt to get out the word is a difficult task in Oklahoma politics. Legislators on both sides of the issue tend to operate in closed circles and even the stories of the alliances necessary to create change are general and not easily understood. The Regents and Chancellor have adopted one slogan to epitomize their effort and publicly call for a "nationally competitive system of higher education." Brisch (1990) clearly understands that reform must precede dollars in Oklahoma, yet the media constantly emphasizes the needed dollars without reporting the reform agenda. This has improved in the Tulsa media; ideological difficulties persist with the Oklahoma City press.

Brisch (1990) also understands the difficulty in pressing ideas where ideology is everything noting that "facts don't mean anything in the public consciousness." Therefore, it is imperative for the Regents to gain the advantage for lasting change to occur. The formidable task is one of providing assurance that this advantage is for higher education's benefit rather than for personal gain.

The Regents' charge is not an enviable task. The legislators who garnered the support for change in top leadership are apparently unable or unwilling to provide the funding necessary to move the Regents' agenda forward. Verbal support remains but the struggle has been placed in the Regents' court. The Regents and Chancellor are making progress with an agenda that includes open communication, emphasis on the corruption of the status quo, and an effort to develop alliances with the business, agriculture, and professional sectors to help overcome a traditional conservative rejection of any change which threatens the way "things have

always been." Will they prevail? As Barnes (1990) concluded, the struggle is not over.

> It's not over at all. We'll probably have to continue our program and continue meaningful progress under our program for another two, three, maybe five years before I would tell you that one system has prevailed over the other. There are an awful lot of people in the system not happy who have spent the majority of their career under the good old boy system...and some of them think they can wait out Regents who are temporary appointees.

Missouri and Oklahoma: A Comparison

This section contains a synopsis of Elazar's (1984) political subcultures and a summary of the author's analysis of the higher education case findings in Missouri and Oklahoma. Political culture theory provides the lens for interpretation.

Elazar (1984) characterized the individualistic culture as rooted in concern for the marketplace "in which the primary public relationships are products of bargaining among individuals and groups acting out of self interest" (p. 112). The everyday interests are economic and politics tend to be partisan and best left to the professionals. Personal autonomy and freedom are the cornerstone. The traditionalistic political culture is an extension of the landed gentry agrarianism of the Old World and the maintenance of an aristocracy. Therefore, the traditionalistic political culture:

> accepts a substantially hierarchical society as part of the ordered nature of things, authorizing and expecting those at the top to take a special and dominant role in government. (Elazar, 1984, p. 118)

Government is seen as a way of maintaining the existing social order. Politics are for the privileged and nurtured through highly personal ties. Finally, the moralistic political culture "is conceived to be a commonwealth...in which the citizens cooperate in an effort to implement shared moral principles (Elazar, 1984, p. 112). Government participation is the domain of all.

A number of contrasts exist in the way higher education planning and policy making is practiced in Missouri and Oklahoma. Communication patterns are vital for any public policy study and the comparison of the two states revealed the dominance of an open system of communication in Missouri and a closed system of communication in Oklahoma in terms of organizational structure and political behavior. Openness is crucial for the maintenance of the marketplace in an individualistic society while the closed communication system supports the private politics and elite ties of a traditionalistic political culture.

Decision making in Missouri takes place within a discernible, dynamic political structure which may be permeated at any time by legislative, agency, and local interests. This permeable structure allows input from many actors with great deliberation over the differing individual interests. The comprehensible structure is designed to maximize local campus autonomy which aligns with Elazar's (1984) characterization of the individual culture's limitation of government intervention "into the private activities to the minimum necessary to keep the marketplace in working order" (p. 114).

Conversely, a very legalistic, formal structure in Oklahoma bore little resemblance to the informal or "shadow" structure in which decision making actually took place. This "shadow structure" was utilized by a small group of "insiders" in which informal alliances constitute the real decision making power and indicated the highly personal ties characteristic of the traditionalistic culture.

Political behavior, as revealed in the case studies, differs quite dramatically as well. Again, Missouri may be characterized as having discernible political dynamics while the dynamics of the Oklahoma system tend to be hidden. Missouri is described as an openly "political" environment characterized by an environment of bartering, compromise, and "wheeling and

dealing" in which multiple and competing agendas and ideas are the rule and this ongoing debate is open to public scrutiny. This does not mean that every "deal" is public knowledge but rather that shared understanding exists for playing the game. The Missouri environment reflects the individualistic "business like" (Elazar, 1984, p. 116) conception of politics while the highly personal traditionalistic ties of the Oklahoma system eschew such openness.

After reviewing the data in light of Elazar's theory, the author discerned that the primary participants gave little actual description of the "hidden" political dynamics of Oklahoma. Care was exercised to present united stories on the part of the change agents and there was a complete lack of information regarding their ascent to positions of influence. Two competing ideologies dominated the higher education scene and there was no public conversation between the opposing sides and no evidence of private deliberations in the atmosphere of controlled communication and competition for advantage. This is indicative of of the existence of the traditionalistic political culture in which change is neither expected nor welcomed and informal alliances replace traditional political ties because:

> they [political parties] encourage a degree of openness that goes against the grain of an elite-oriented political order...Political competition...is usually conducted through factional alignments, an extension of the personal politics characteristic of the system. (Elazar, 1984, p. 119)

Once again, there is evidence of a power struggle between the opposing factions of a traditionalistic system. The fact that the legislative change agents are engaged in a "contest" played within the "old rules" of closed communication presents a curious paradox. The movement of the legislative change agents may be interpreted in several ways. The simple explanation is that the "contest" is merely an attempt by one group to gain advantage over another and that the change agents will replace the former insiders as the

power within the structure, and thus, perpetuate the traditionalistic structure. A better explanation would be that the change agents face the necessity of working within the only existing structure until sufficient grassroots support exists for changing that structure. Attempts by the Chancellor and Regents to actually activate and operate within the published legal structure suggest that the latter explanation is more accurate.

Concern with economics dominates the public discussion in Missouri centering on the continuing individualistic theme of improving the marketplace. The higher education agenda revolves around the desire to position the state to compete economically in the global arena of the next century. The establishment of the Business Education Partnership Commission as a forum for ideas to address the needs of the marketplace illustrates the economic development driven agenda.

An anomaly in an otherwise individualistic portrait of Missouri is the behavior of the Missouri Senate. Characterized as a "brotherhood" or "club," the Senators tend to downplay party affiliation within the Chamber and emphasize their mutual interests. Differences tend to be based in geographical or ideological issues. Elazar (1984) explained that in traditionalistic cultures, "political parties are of minimal importance" (p. 119) because they encourage an openness not conducive to the maintenance of a ruling elite. Though possessing distinctively traditionalistic tendencies, the Senators also displayed characteristics of the individualistic culture in their willingness to describe their activities and "deals" and through their interest in the marketplace.

The current "contest" in Oklahoma centers on two competing ideologies presented publicly as a zero sum game in which there can only be a winner and a loser. The lack of public conversation results in mistrust and perceptions of corruption by both sides. Positioning for dominance has

replaced any exchange of ideas. The press takes an active part in the control of information. Efforts on the part of the Regents and Chancellor to garner public support and create a public debate are frequently circumvented by the dynamics of the prevailing traditionalistic system where such public sharing of information represents a dilution of the absolute power of a ruling elite.

Power in Missouri is centered in the business like approach of "brokering" in which power is appropriated through the principle of fair competition and on the basis of the perceived credibility and competency of the current players. Intense parochialism or individual interest on the part of the legislators results in a continuing positioning for power depending on the issues and alliances of the moment. This conception of politics results in shifting higher education power due to shifting splits dependent on the particular issue. Allies on one issue may be foes on the next and there is considerable evidence of an ability to avoid personal animosity based in political position, even in the case of partisan battles. Once again, the impersonal "business-like" conception of the individualistic system is evident. The open competition of a marketplace environment is championed and the "rules" are clearly understood.

Political power in Oklahoma is apparently based in more permanent positioning for dominance. Traditionalistic factional alignments are evident. Permanent splits such as the division between the two major cities and the east and west sections of the state has resulted in a code of "personal politics characteristic of the [traditionalistic] system" (Elazar, 1984, p. 119) in which permanent sides and alliances are formed and the relationship to the opposition becomes permanently adversarial.

As previously mentioned, there has been an effort to permeate the closed system by the proactive efforts of the current Chancellor and State Regents.

The Regents, with definite agendas for state economic growth and development, and a progressive Chancellor are attempting to use the moralistic means of engaging in public debate to bring about the individualistic goal of building a nationally competitive system of higher education capable of preparing citizens and the state to compete in the global marketplace. This effort has resulted in changing attitudes in the business and professional community and the attempt to generate a business-like approach to the exchange of ideas and an emphasis on quality control. The dynamics of the closed system have placed the change agents in the precarious position of competing for power within the structure of the old system before any real attempt to change the system can be made. The outcome is uncertain.

Summary. Elazar's historical classifications of state political culture match the current higher education planning and policy making processes in operation today in the neighboring states of Missouri and Oklahoma. The classifications appear to be most firmly rooted in Missouri where the evidence points to a state ethos of individualistic concern with the marketplace and confidence in the ability of the business world to enhance the quality of life for state citizens.

The state ethos of Oklahoma indicates a historical distrust and dislike of big business and an allegiance to the southern agrarian idea of maintaining the traditionalistic status quo. The in-migration of political outsiders, an education leader with differing political values, and the emergence of a professional and business population committed to the maintenance of the marketplace represent an individualistic sub-population willing to engage the current culture in a battle for dominance.

Conclusions

The preceding analysis of the case study information and the findings lead to the author's conclusion that differences do exist in statewide higher

education planning and policy making between Missouri and Oklahoma. Political culture is a major factor and there is a relationship between political culture and both the political behavior and organizational structure in statewide higher education planning and policy making in Missouri and Oklahoma.

The findings and conclusions support Elazar's historical political culture designations for two states during a specific legislative session. The results link with previous research findings to suggest that political culture patterns tend to remain constant over time and continue to impact public policy understanding and practice. Specifically, this case study illustrates the utility of political culture as a contextual tool for understanding the dynamics of statewide higher education planning and policy making. Consideration of historical cultural differences provides a valuable way to think about the political environment of the state higher education decision making process and should assist researchers and practitioners in understanding interstate differences in organizational structure and the political behavior of primary participants.

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APPENDIX

Interview Model
(Adaptation of Fuhrman and Rosenthal, 1981)

A. Determine the structure of legislative higher education leadership through the exploration of:

1. location of leaders by chamber, party, position
2. concentration of leadership
3. role of staff

B. Understand composition of legislative higher education leadership through the exploration of:

1. motivation for involvement
2. specialization in and within the field
3. continuity of leadership
4. benefits and costs of higher education leadership

C. Determine the styles of higher education legislative leadership through the exploration of:

1. methods of exerting leadership
2. special skills and talents of legislators
3. traits which distinguish leaders
4. aggregate style--consensual or conflictual

D. Understand legislative linkages through the exploration of:

1. relationships with state agencies
2. relationships with interest groups
3. involvement of local actors
4. impact of organization outside the state

E. Determine the impact of higher education leadership on:

1. other education actors
2. policies and programs